

PREAMBLE

In order to better protect the residents and natural resources of Leon County and the City of Tallahassee from adverse impacts of stormwater runoff, both entities are hereby creating the Watershed Protection Plan set forth below. This Plan is based on a coordinated approach which transitions both jurisdictions to basin specific Watershed Management Plans. This Plan provides for improved environmental protection and efficient use of financial resources with the intention that by year five, City and County inconsistencies will have been eliminated. This Plan provides a framework whereby the governments may either continue to operate separate stormwater departments or join them at a future date, but regardless of that decision, the standards applied to stormwater management will no longer be based on jurisdictional boundaries. Ultimately, both governments will adopt consistent sets of stormwater plans for each specific basin, tailored to the soil types, typography and other conditions specific to that basin. This Plan is consistent with requirements found in the Stormwater and Conservation Elements of the Tallahassee/Leon County Comprehensive Plan (Attachment A).

The creation of a Consolidated Stormwater Program or a single Stormwater Utility in Leon County has been suggested. Neither course, if adopted, resolves both of the most frequently cited challenges: Policy (differing city and county development standards) and Financial (user fees versus special tax assessments, and differing City/County program revenue generation). Both city and county stormwater programs have good records of achievement. What has been lacking is a formalized process for coordination and consistency. This Plan, if approved and codified in a more detailed Interlocal Agreement, will provide the needed coordination and consistency.

Structure Rationale: The Policy Board and Technical Staff referenced in the Plan will comprise diverse groups with a range of perspectives. These perspectives include internal knowledge of current policies, programs and funding capabilities, and external (non-institutional) expertise on stormwater issues. Balance is achieved by the addition of external representatives with scientific and academic background in disciplines such as hydrology, biology, ecology, etc. to augment engineering expertise. The Policy Board is advisory in nature and will make recommendations to the City and County Commissions.

Strategic Action Plan: This Plan proposes a course of action intended to lead to a Coordinated Watershed Approach to Stormwater Management. Currently both the Federal Government (U.S. EPA) and the State of Florida (FDEP) have proposed certain TMDL standards for waterbodies or conveyance system segments in Leon County and the City of Tallahassee, and are expected to propose and issue others over the next few years. Both the City and County intend to participate in the process of developing TMDLs for area waterbodies, this Plan does not address or affect the role of the City or County in the independent process of developing the TMDLs. The City and County, however, will be required to comply with and implement the TMDLs when they are finalized. This Watershed Protection Plan thus simply states that the final standards will be implemented in the timeframe prescribed by state or federal law. The "Basin Management Plans" referenced in II.B.3 reflect DEP terminology and address such plans when they come forward, consistent with the final TMDL standards.

WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

I. STRUCTURE

A. Watershed Management Policy Board

Membership to include five members to meet quarterly:

- 1 County Commissioner
- 1 City Commissioner

Jointly Appointed by Mayor/Chair:

- 1 Leon County Science Advisory Committee Member – private sector
- 1 Science Academic – FSU/FAMU
- 1 Citizen – with documented commitment to and knowledge of stormwater issues – non-voting except as tiebreaker

B. Technical Support Staff

Membership to include:

- 1 County stormwater director
- 1 City stormwater director
- NFWFMD staff – hydrologist or natural science expertise
- FDEP staff – Bureau of Watershed Management
- Florida Lakes Management Society Member – with scientific background

II. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

A. Short Term – Phasing in our new approach (1 to 3 years)

1. Collate Existing Data, Create and Manage a Database of Water Quality and Bioassessment Data
 - a. Review water quality and flood data and maps; identify gaps
 - b. Recommend studies/stormwater models to fill gap
2. Structural and Non-structural Capital Projects – Grouped by Watershed
 - a. Inventory and map city/county capital projects lists (completed, under construction and proposed)
 - b. Determine watershed prioritization of projects for action by respective jurisdictions:
 - 1st Priority – Upstream water quality and flooding solutions
 - 2nd Priority – In-Lake restoration projects

3. Recommend new projects as needed.
4. Recommend policies to increase recreational opportunities, public access and habitat enhancement in area lakes.

B. Long Term – Implement Watershed Mgt. – 3 years and beyond

1. Oversee the Implementation of final State and/or Federal TMDL standards.
2. Review Current Regulatory and Fee Structures.
3. Recommend changes, as required, to support Adopted Basin Management Plans.
4. Adopt Watershed Management Plans for major basins.

C. Public Education/Involvement – Immediate and On-going

1. Install Watershed Delineation Signage on Major Roadways.
2. Create and provide educational materials on non-profit source pollution to neighborhoods on watershed resources and projects.
 - a. General – Watershed residents
 - b. Specific - Lakeside residents dos and don'ts
3. Prepare annual report, compiled from existing GIS data and on-going Lake Monitoring Annual Reports, on the condition of major water bodies in Leon County.
4. Establish and Maintain Watershed Protection Initiative Website.
5. Establish annual Watershed Champion Award – annual competition for citizen/neighborhood/businesses – pollutant reduction of flood control.